

CLASS: 1



WESTPOINT STEVENS

From: Gene RobertsDate: 5

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Engineering and Environmental Department
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To:

Name: Nancy CroweCompany: Regulatory Policy ServicesDepartment: Office of Exporter ServicesCity & State: Washington, DC 20230FAX #: 202-482-3355**Comments or Messages**

Number of pages being sent (excluding cover page): 2
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WESTPOINT STEVENS

August 20, 1999

Ms. Nancy Crowe
Regulatory Policy Division
Office of Exporter Services
Bureau of Export Administration
Room 2705
14th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20230
BY FAX: 202-482-3355

Re: Proposed Chemical Weapons Convention Regulations

Dear Ms. Crowe:

WestPoint Stevens Inc. hereby submits comments regarding proposed regulations (Federal Register, Volume 64, No. 139, pages 39193 - 39244) relating to the Chemical Weapons Convention. WestPoint Stevens is a home fashions consumer products marketing company, with a comprehensive line of Company-owned and licensed brands for the bedroom and bathroom. The Company is the nation's leading manufacturer and marketer of bed linens, towels, comforters, and other accessories that are sold at retail outlets throughout the world. WestPoint Stevens has operations in nine states and employs some 18,000 individuals. Grifftex Chemicals, a subsidiary of WestPoint Stevens, also manufactures chemicals for use in our textile facilities and in other companies in the textile industry. Grifftex Chemicals will be impacted by the regulations as proposed, and we wish to make relevant comments and suggest alternatives.

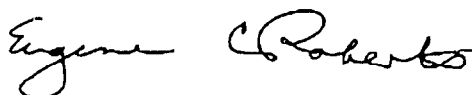
Part 715, relating to the synthesis of UDOC's (Unscheduled Discrete Organic Chemicals), is completely illogical in its approach to: a) chemicals which are subject to this Part; b) the threshold proposed; c) the absence of a *de minimis* percentage of the synthesized chemical; and d) an exclusion for chemicals intended for other than chemical weapons purposes. It appears that the manufacturing entities targeted by Part 715 include any facility which is able to synthesize bulk quantities of nearly any organic chemical, as defined. Grifftex Chemicals manufactures chemicals in bulk, of which several chemicals may exceed the 200 metric tons threshold. Therefore, the initial declaration, annual reporting, and inspections will be required.

The greatest problem in the application of Part 715 of the proposed regulations is that, for example, none of the chemicals manufactured by Griffex Chemicals have, to the best of our knowledge, any purpose relating to chemical weapons. Other Parts of the regulations require "chemical weapons purposes" to trigger their coverage, and we recommend that such purposes also be applied in Part 715.

The chemicals synthesized by Griffex Chemicals would escape being subject to Part 715 if the 80% minimum content were applied as in Part 714, and we believe this to be a valid approach since many of the chemicals manufactured are water-based. This appears to be a logical means of exclusion for some UDOC's, even in other than the textile industry.

There is good logic in the molecular structure approach to chemical declarations, etc., found in Parts 712, 713, and 714, but there is apparently no logic in the approach to control chemical weapons in the broad-based approach of Part 715. The ability to synthesize large quantities of nearly any organic chemical, as would now be required by Part 715, appears to trigger coverage by this Part, but such an ability does not appear to logically relate to the necessary synthetic capabilities or appropriate thresholds compatible with organic chemicals for chemical weapons purposes. It is also difficult to imagine that someone who synthesizes 430,000 pounds (slightly less than 200 metric tons) of an organic chemical, somehow useful for a chemical weapons purpose, could or should escape appropriate regulation, but that is the way it may be interpreted at present. As a former synthetic organic chemist, it is clear to me that synthetic bulk capabilities do not relate to the fine and sophisticated equipment that may be necessary to manufacture chemical weapons intermediates or end products.

Sincerely,



Eugene C. Roberts, Ph. D.
Associate Director,
Engineering & Environmental Department